

Why gastronomy tubes, G-tubes and PEG tubes are prohibited in Residential Facilities for Groups/Group Homes/Assisted Living Facilities

Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 449.271 prohibits facilities from admitting or retaining a resident that requires gastrostomy care. This bulletin serves to explain why residential facilities/group homes/assisted living facilities are prohibited from caring for persons with gastrostomy tubes.

Gastrostomy tubes (G-tubes) or percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tubes are rubber or silicone tubes that are surgically inserted through the skin and the stomach wall, directly into the stomach. The tubes are used to feed and administer medications to people who cannot swallow correctly, who cannot take enough food in by mouth or who breathe in food while eating. A syringe or a pump is used to inject (instill) liquids into the stomach through the tube. The G-tube may be temporary or permanent.

There are numerous complications that can occur with G-tubes and their care should be done by licensed medical personnel, such as nurses, because those complications can be life threatening. Leakage around the tube can cause skin irritation and breakdown which requires specialized care to prevent the spread of infection and prevent further skin breakdown. To prevent liquid instillations from entering the abdominal cavity, a nursing assessment is critical before the instillation of any liquid into the tube. The G-tube can become blocked when liquid tube feedings and crushed medications plug the tube. To prevent blockage, G-tubes are flushed before and after every instillation and the stomach can become over-extended if too much has been instilled. An over-extended stomach may cause the contents to back-up into the esophagus and into the lungs causing aspiration pneumonia. Complications can also occur if liquids other than water are used to flush the tube or food other than a specially prepared solution. Another serious complication is the dislodgement of the G-tube. The hole that is created to access the inside of the stomach can close up within 4 hours if the tube is dislodged.

Residential facilities for groups/group homes/assisted living facilities are not staffed with nurses. The care of G-tubes is complex, requires technical skills and the complications can be life threatening. For these reasons, a resident who requires care for his G-tube is prohibited from being admitted or allowed to remain in the facility.

There is an exception to this regulation. A resident with a G-tube must be competent and capable of caring for his/her own G-tube without the assistance from any other person. That means a nurse or family member, cannot be involved. This type of resident would be allowed admission or be allowed to remain if the facility submits an exemption waiver to the Bureau per NAC 449.2736(1)(2a-d). The resident will also be evaluated by a Bureau representative to verify competence and independence in the care of his/her own G-tube.